



In this issue...

- *Seasonal Affective Disorder -- Just Another Name For "Winter Depression"*
- *CIGNA to Buy Great-West Healthcare*
- *State Payroll System to Convert to Employee Identification Numbers on December 26*
- *Self-Funded Medical Plan Gets New Provider Network*
- *Training Waivers Required to Access Training Outside the State System*
- *A basic Guide to Providing Benefits Info to New Hires*
- *Representatives from the State's Retirement Plans Available for All State Employees*
- *Colorado Minimum Wage Increases January 1, 2008*
- *Proposed Personal Leave Policy – Common Frequently Asked Questions*
- *Use of Personal Vehicle Insurance Advisory*
- *More Snow Equates to More Employee injuries*

General Announcements

- *Welcome New Staff To Consulting Services*
- *Travis Engelhardt Appointed To Compensation Unit Supervisor*
- *Job Eval Glossary Updated*
- *Job Evaluation & Compensation PCP Scheduled*
- *Save The Date for Next Selection Forum*
- [*Print or read the entire Advisor*](#)

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER – JUST ANOTHER NAME FOR “WINTER DEPRESSION”

The winter months usually are a time of pleasant feelings and experiences, like holiday festivities and outings to the ski slopes. For some, however, this season and its shorter days may cause Seasonal Affective Disorder, sometimes also known as SAD or “winter depression”. SAD is estimated to affect 10-20% of the general population. [*View Full Article*](#)

CIGNA TO BUY GREAT-WEST HEALTHCARE

On November 26, an agreement was signed by CIGNA Corp. to purchase Great-West Healthcare from its parent company, Great-West Life & Annuity. This transaction is expected to be finalized next spring, subject to regulatory approvals. Great-West Healthcare is the third-party administrator for the State's self-funded medical plan. [*View Full Article*](#)

STATE PAYROLL SYSTEM TO CONVERT TO EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS ON DECEMBER 26

The State Personnel System's conversion from social security numbers to an employee identification (EID) number will begin on December 26, and will better enable state agencies to keep SSN's confidential, reduce potential identify theft, and comply with Colorado Revised Statute 6-1-715 regarding confidentiality for employees. [*View Full Article*](#)

SELF-FUNDED MEDICAL PLAN GETS NEW PROVIDER NETWORK

Starting January 1, 2008 the State's self-funded medical plan will move to a new network of providers, Great-West's Open Access Network. This replaces Great West's PPO network, and has no connection to the recent announcement concerning CIGNA buying Great West. [*View Full Article*](#)

TRAINING WAIVERS REQUIRED TO ACCESS TRAINING OUTSIDE THE STATE SYSTEM

Any state employee training that requires expenditure of state funds paid to external training vendors must get approval through the waiver process. The purpose of the waiver program is to ensure cost efficiencies, quality control, and monitor training needs and expenditures for reporting purposes. By

statute, the State Personnel Director is required to review and approve expenditures for all employee training provided by external vendors. [View Full Article](#)

A BASIC GUIDE TO PROVIDING BENEFITS INFO TO NEW HIRES

New employees have a lot to learn. Who's who, security protocol, getting paid, systems, passwords, processes, and if they have any time left, their actual job duties. Then there is the not so inconsequential task of benefits decisions. Everyone should give this task the weight it is due, since the decisions can affect an employee and their family for an entire year, and in some cases, their entire career. However, the Division of Human Resources, Employee Benefits Unit has been seeing a number of new hires who report they have missed all or parts of their benefits information. [View Full Article](#)

REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE STATE'S RETIREMENT PLANS AVAILABLE FOR ALL STATE EMPLOYEES

Most employees in the U.S. are not saving nearly enough for retirement. This is not news; we've all heard it before. But is there anything HR departments can do to help State employees save more for retirement? Research shows that for healthcare alone, the average couple will spend \$250,000 in retirement. Experts and studies claim that most people will need 65% to 90% of their final annual salary, *each year of retirement*. How can HR help employees achieve this goal? One of the best methods is to provide employees with information and education about retirement finances. One of the easiest ways for employees to become more educated is to invite representatives from the State's retirement providers (State DC Plan and PERA plans) to their workplace. [View Full Article](#)

COLORADO MINIMUM WAGE INCREASES JANUARY 1, 2008

With the passage of Amendment 42 in November 2006, the Colorado Constitution requires the state minimum wage to be adjusted annually for inflation. Effective January 1, 2008, Colorado's minimum wage will increase from \$6.85 to \$7.02 per hour. [View Full Article](#)

PROPOSED PERSONAL LEAVE POLICY – COMMON FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Reprinted, in part, from October Stateline

The Department of Personnel & Administration (DPA) is proposing a new leave policy that would combine state employees' accrued leave — annual and sick — into a single ***Personal Leave*** account. As with any proposed change, this has generated some questions and concerns from the state workforce; this article has been modified and reprinted from the October *Stateline*, and again is intended to address the most commonly expressed questions and concerns from state employees. [View Full Article](#)

USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLE INSURANCE ADVISORY

A new ruling of the Supreme Court states that employees who drive their personal vehicles within the course and scope of their employment are immune from tort claims arising from operating such vehicles. If a claim is filed against the employee, Risk Management would handle the claim under the terms of the Governmental Immunity Act, although the claim for damages would likely be denied due to the immunity issue. There is, however, a conflict with state statutes related to restitution, which might result in a court ordering the employee to make personal restitution to the other party as a result of the employee's traffic violation. [View Full Article](#)

MORE SNOW EQUATES TO MORE EMPLOYEE INJURIES

Last winter state employees were injured in 38 motor vehicle accidents from November 2006 to March 2007. These accidents totaled a whopping \$546,520 in workers' compensation claim costs. In comparison, from November 2005 to March 2006 there were 33 motor vehicle accidents totaling \$269,174 in workers' compensation claim costs. Similarly on the liability side, there were 52% more vehicle claims processed in FY07 than in FY06 for the same period. FY07 Liability claim costs were 287% of the states FY06 experience. [View Full Article](#)

General Announcements

WELCOME NEW STAFF TO CONSULTING SERVICES

The Consulting Services Unit in DHR would like to welcome its newest members, Skye Brunick and Tina Miller. Skye joined the consulting services team from the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). Skye began her career with CDHS in 1996 and brings an extensive human resources background to DHR. Tina came to DHR in 2005 and has rejoined the consulting services team. Her state career began in 1985 and she has worked in human resources at the Colorado Department of Human Services, Natural Resources, and currently the Department of Personnel & Administration. Both Skye and Tina are PCP certified in Selection, Job Evaluation, and Personal Services Contracts. We bid farewell to Shelley Oxenreider and Kathy DePew. Shelley became the HR Administrator for the Department of Law and Kathy DePew joined the Department of Agriculture as the HR Administrator.

TRAVIS ENGELHARDT APPOINTED TO COMPENSATION UNIT SUPERVISOR

DHR's new Compensation Unit Supervisor is Travis Engelhardt. Travis has been with DHR's compensation team for more than six years and is committed to providing the highest level of service and consultation to all state departments and higher education institutions. Travis replaces Don Fowler, who retired in August.

JOB EVAL GLOSSARY UPDATED

The Job Evaluation Glossary has been updated to include a general concept comparison of fully operational and staff authority concepts. This comparison document will continue to be made available at Job Evaluation PCP training and will now be available on the DHR Web site as part of the glossary. The Job Evaluation Glossary may be accessed at colorado.gov/dpa/dhr/comp/jobeval.htm.

JOB EVALUATION & COMPENSATION PCP SCHEDULED

The Division of Human Resources Compensation Team will present the two-day personnel certification course (PCP) in Job Evaluation and Compensation on December 18-19 in Denver. The class will **begin at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 18** and will be held in Room 110 at 1313 Sherman St., Denver. The course will continue on **Wednesday, December 19 and finish by 4:00 p.m.** Attendees should call or email Carmen Schrimpscher at 303-866-2391 or carmen.schrimpscher@state.co.us to reserve a spot in the class. Other questions about the course, accessibility, or parking should be referred to Travis Engelhardt at 303-866-4252 or travis.engelhardt@state.co.us.

SAVE THE DATE FOR NEXT SELECTION FORUM

The next Selection Forum will be held on Thursday, February 14, 2008 in the Tivoli Student Union at the Auraria Higher Education Center. All HR Professionals and HR Administrators are encouraged to attend this informative meeting. In keeping with the coincidental holiday, selection-related discussions will include such topics as "Your Love for Selection" and "On-Line Applications, a story of love and hate." For more information, contact Consulting Services at hrc.consulting.services@state.co.us.